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TWENTY-FOUR HOURS WITH AN ENGLISH DAILY PAPER.

THE vast and growing power exercised by the periodical press over the intelligence and character of the people of Britain and America, gives to all its proceedings an interest and a weight, which can scarcely be overrated. If there be aught of truth in the universally-admitted axiom, that "knowledge is power," it is obviously a matter of no small moment that the aims and the workings of this mighty agency should be understood; while to every thoughtful observer of the history of the progress of knowledge, an inquiry as to the means and appliances by which so much is accomplished will be one of interest. In order that the reader may be aided in his researches for information on this point, we propose to invite his attention to the agencies which are brought to bear upon the production of a copy of a London daily paper. But as it is our intention before long to refer more fully to the mechanical arrangements of a large printing establishment, we have now to look rather at the literary history of a paper during its rise and progress, its rapid and ephemeral career of some four-and-twenty hours, which, without further preface, we shall now proceed to examine.

The agents of the proprietors of the daily papers seem to be characterised by absolute ubiquity. No change in the dynasty of a foreign nation, and no incident, however insignificant in itself, in which the public feel any interest, is unrecorded. Agents in all civilised lands are at work. "Our Own Correspondent" at Paris collects the history, public and private, which may be worthy of note. On rising in the morning he reads deeply into the records of the *Constitutionnel*, the *Moniteur*, the *Debats*, and *Galignani*, and, being familiar with the past history of the politics of France, and on the *qui vive* for most of the anticipated changes, he determines on what shall be forwarded home. Should any point require confirmation, a brisk drive to the Hotel de Ville, or to a brother journalist, or a call on some friend on whom he can rely, completes his stores of information, and he returns to complete his article. Meanwhile the quick pens of rapid translators have been at work, and the morning despatch is ready, and, enclosed in the capacious envelope, with its printed address, it is deposited in the post-office in the Rue J. J. Rousseau before eleven o'clock.

"The day is yet early, and a stroll through the city, a call upon friends, a gossip at some public office, and in a *café*, another glance through the newspapers, an overhaul of the letters from Rome, from Naples, from Turin, from Madrid, which the post has brought, and the correspondent is ready to prepare his more elaborate despatch for the five o'clock post. This is a matter of importance, and takes time. If the Chambers are sitting, a reporter has been placed there to give the proceedings, and, as the hour of five draws near, the 'copy' accumulates. The despatch is written; extracts from the leading Parisian papers have been made; *Galignani* has been laid under contribution; some digests of French statistical papers have been summarised into readable and valuable *pairs*; the report of the Paris Bourse, and of the Madrid Bolsa, come in, followed quickly by that from the Chambers, delayed till the last half-minute that the proceedings might be brought up till the latest possible moment before the words 'left sit.' closed the copy. Again the capacious envelope, with its printed address, is ready, and the abundant contributions of Paris towards the London stock of news find it way to the post just two seconds and a quarter before the bureau closes." *

While Paris has thus been ransacked of its intelligence, other agents of the fourth estate have been at work in the other centres of power in Europe. The proceedings of the court, the legislature, and of the people generally in Prussia, are duly recorded at Berlin; the price of stock, as affected by the movements of the government, are detailed from Hamburg; and a story of religious persecution in Tuscany, the political squabbles of Italy, or some tale of folly in Madrid, are announced. Special correspondents, too, are appointed to special work. One is, perhaps, vibrating between contending

armies, running some risk of being shot by either as a spy; another records the movements of a celebrated political refugee; a third is on the look-out in the Mediterranean, to see when and where the British squadron is collecting, in order to make an armed demonstration to help a diplomatic manœuvre; while a fourth tries to pass himself off as a "Celestial," in order to obtain the earliest intelligence in reference to the doings of the court at Peking. The ever-present activity of the agents of our newspapers is well indicated in "Pendennis":—"There she is—the great engine—she never sleeps. She has her ambassadors in every quarter of the world—her courtiers upon every road. Her officers march along with armies, and her envoys walk into statesmen's cabinets. They are ubiquitous. Yonder journal has an agent at this minute giving bribes at Madrid; and another inspects the price of potatoes at Covent Garden."

Then there are the leading articles to be written, in which so much of power is embodied. Has some vile abuse in the ecclesiastical works of the double-headed constitution been dragged, putrid and reeking, to light by a self-emulated Horsman—the leading organs must not let the matter pass unheeded; and while the high-church papers bluster, and fume, and prevaricate, the less blind or more honest will severally palliate them, or expose them to the public contempt, according to the parties of which they are the organs. Has the purification and drainage of this mighty metropolis been entrusted to a commission, which has, in its wisdom, devised and perfected some grand and scientific scheme for still pouring the filth of London into the water which it afterwards drinks?—the public will want to know something of the matter. Has some everlasting debate on an interminable theme occupied the attention of the legislators during unnumbered days, of the drift and purport of which no one either in or out of the house has any distinct idea?—the morning papers must lend their aid for the explanation of the matter, to help or to terminate the discussion. Has some gallant steam-ship—one of England's wooden walls, and to whose protective guardianship she looks to defend her from all comers—accomplished the extraordinary feat of arriving home within only twice the time taken by an average commercial vessel?—the attention of all must be invited to her performance; and foreign nations must be told, that if it is doubtful whether her men-of-war can fight their guns in a rough sea, it is not at all doubtful that they will not be able to run away. Should a great statesman have returned from the retirement of private life, and come forth from the less obtrusive but more permanent labours of the historian, to exchange the sonorous periods, brilliant antitheses, and gorgeous metaphors, with which he has delighted nations, for the business activity and "sterner stuff" of St. Stephens, the event must be proclaimed from one end of the land to the other. In short the great incidents of every day must be duly chronicled at the earliest period, and their philosophy and anticipated results propounded for the edification of all whom they may concern.

Meanwhile, too, a selection must be made from among the mass of communications which have arrived from "Constant Readers," "Old Correspondents," "Ten Years Subscribers," and others with less significant designations, in reference to all sorts of grievances which nobody but the editor of the paper can repeal, and all sorts of aspirations in which no one else can fully sympathise; and from these he has chosen a few which are likely to be of some service in throwing light upon matters of public interest, while the rest are remorselessly consigned—without even a shudder or a sigh—to oblivion, with all their elaborated inanities and overdone adulation, calling to mind the words of Crabbe, who depicts the pangs of a rejected contributor:—

"Oh! cruel Woodfall! when a patriot draws
His grey goose-quill in his dear country's cause,
To vex and maul a ministerial race,
Can thy stern soul refuse the champion place?
Alas! thou know'st not with what anxious heart,
He longs his best-loved labours to impart;
How he has sent them to thy brethren round,
And still the same unkind reception found."

* The Fourth Estate, by Hunt.

Other agents, too, have been at work. The correspondent at Dublin has sent off his package *via* the steamer to Holyhead, which will arrive in time for press; and this is, perhaps, the earliest contribution which was prepared. The writer of the City article is drawing up a statement of the worth of funds, of foreign stock and exchanges, and has dabbled a little in cotton, coal, colonies, and corn, each of which have their effect on 'Change, while he sums up, perhaps, with some comments on the returns of the Bank of England for the previous week. Another correspondent is noting down the prices of sugar, coffee, rice, and cochineal, and giving the amount of tea deliveries during the week; others, from Mark-lane and elsewhere, are telling of the state of the weather, the prospects of crops, the price of grain, and the arrivals of flour. The shares at the railway market are remarked, with the items for lines leased, preference shares, and foreign lines. Incidents in railway intelligence are also preparing, of meetings held, lines projected, the royal assent given to new bills, the progress of parliamentary committees, and the traffic returns for the preceding week on English and foreign lines. Meanwhile reporters in different parts of the country have taken down the speeches of eloquent advocates of the miseries of free intercourse among nations; of speeches on agricultural distress, church extension, or the advocacy of the separation of all religious teaching from state control; and the last up-train will bring the intelligence. Nor have other sources of information been neglected. The law-courts have had their sittings recorded, the police magistrates have uttered their decisions in the presence of those who will lay them before the public, while in each coroner's court the "highly respectable jury" look with surprise at the sometimes humble garb of the penny-a-line representatives of "the papers." Has a fatal collision taken place on a railway—has a bankrupt obtained his certificate—has a student passed his examination at Apothecaries' Hall—has an old woman been knocked down by an omnibus at a City crossing—has a new achievement in science been made?—there is an eye to watch and a pencil to record the fact. Whether a speech has been delivered by a candidate for a vacant seat, or a fire broken out, or a City improvement been contemplated, or a ship arrived in port or sailed to other lands, or a scholarship been gained, or a society held its anniversary, or a festival been observed, or a boat-race come off, or a baker been seen putting alum in his bread, or preserved meats for the navy found out to be only potted putridity, or anything else in any part of the land equally deserving a historian,—one is there, who will lay the facts in a few graphic lines before the world, and make them as familiar with it as though "they were there to see it."

Of the agents by whom a good deal of this kind of information is obtained, a word must be said. Besides the regular staff of writers, contributors, and correspondents, there are the penny-a-liners, the stragglers of the London press, the foragers of stray news, the narrators of street accidents, suicides, murders, police cases, and all the odds and ends of small intelligence which fill up the columns of the daily papers, and are afterwards "borrowed," without acknowledgment, by weekly successors. There is a large class of this fraternity, whose professional activities find their sphere within the limits of the metropolis; and so exclusive are their arrangements, that, by the prescriptive right of prior possession, they have contrived to parcel out the metropolis among them, each man reigning supreme in his own district. They have been classified into six orders: the police reporter, the fashionable reporter, the fireman, the accident and murder man, the inquest man, and the vestry man; while there is sometimes a mingling of these various functions in the person of some more active and intelligent member of the order.

In obtaining the information they require they manifest ceaseless vigilance, and extraordinary verbosity in the narration of the event to be recorded—this last characteristic being duly regarded by the sub-editor, whose duty it is to prune their exuberance before it passes to the columns of the paper. Philosophers have expatiated on the preternatural capacities of vultures in detecting the existence of carrion; but this

scarcely surpasses the keenness of the scent of penny-a-liners for blood. He tells a murder afar off. He hovers round the spot as soon as the first clue has been found, and rakes and scratches about till he has found sufficient to justify a statement and a promise of "further particulars." He ingratiates himself with all parties, and will suffer any amount of indignity, with Boswellian heroism, to obtain the earliest intelligence, or the most minute particulars, in order to gratify a vitiated appetite in certain sections of readers, and to satisfy the physical cravings of his own stomach by the produce of his researches. He has donned the livery of a great family to learn the particulars of a dinner, and has been put under the pump for prying with impertinent familiarity into other people's business. He has measured the strength of the law with a magistrate who has been annoyed at his reports, and who turned him, by a stretch of authority, out of court, and made the public officer compromise the matter; and he has been left upon a mud-bank by an indignant boatman for intruding himself on the privacy of distinguished personages in their own barge. He will obtain the last news from a policeman, on the promise of calling him "an intelligent and active officer;" he has ingratiated himself into favour with parish orators, by recording the fact that their speeches were received with "loud applause;" he has fed on the best of the remnants after a banquet, on the strength of the assurance of his commendation of the hospitality of the host; he has altered—quite by mistake, of course—the names of parties who have had to appear before the police-magistrates, and whose reputations would not have bettered by the exposure; and he has invented circumstantial reports of incidents, couched in terms so guarded, and with allusions so definite and yet so mystic as to disarm suspicion that they were the creations of his own imagination, and so untangible as to defy contradiction.

Such is the value of the aid of this fraternity to the daily papers of London, that they pay on an average about £1,000 a-year each for the reports thus furnished, while by the smaller payments of the evening and Sunday journals this is increased by some £2,000 or £3,000 per annum. It is also asserted, that considerable sums are also paid every year for suppressions of facts which those interested "had rather not" have come to light.

But we must hasten to a close. Gradually the information required to fill the columns of the paper has been accumulated,—the type has been set-up by the compositors—editor and sub. have seen how it all looks, and at length the "forms" are completed, and the paper put to press. And then how the mighty machinery which has been got in perfect readiness is set to work, and forthwith from its huge cylinders rush forth the sheets, which a few seconds before were white as driven snow, but now covered with those silent forms of ink which are so eloquent of meaning, and which are to spread over the length and breadth of the land the day's history of the world. The speed at which these are printed, is in the *Times* office some 200 a minute, or 12,000 an hour.

Before concluding our brief notice of this subject, a word must be said of the men by whom so much is accomplished. The power exerted by the editors of the influential papers of any reading community is very great, and their work is in many respects *sui generis*. Amid all the labours, incessant and onerous, connected with the management of a daily paper, there are agreeable changes to enliven the scene, and generally a circle of friends and associates to animate and assist. In an evening paper, Jerdan tells us, the opportunities of this kind are very welcome and tempting. About two o'clock the sheet has gone to press, and there ensues two or three hours of light work and leisure, to see that something is ready for the morrow, all right for the day, and pay attention to every novelty which might spring up and demand an improved edition. Especially is this the case at periods of popular excitement. The evening journals are then, of course, on the *qui vive* for any arrivals; and during the times of war great efforts were made to obtain the last intelligence. For this purpose a single French newspaper, smuggled over in spite

of the continental non-intercourse policy, would be brought for sale about three or four o'clock, and ten, twenty, and a hundred guineas paid for it, if the date was recent, and it contained any fresh accounts or bulletins of Bonaparte's German campaigns. Of the importance of the news thus obtained, an idea will be found from a note which we transcribe, addressed to the then editor of the *Sun*, and quoted by him in his "Autobiography:"—

"Mr. Goulburn presents his compliments to Mr. Jerdan, and is extremely obliged to him for the very interesting and satisfactory information contained in the *Sun* of this evening, of which Government had not received any information from other quarters.

"Downing-street, October 8th, 1813."

Some of these editors have been very strange fellows. When the *Aurora* newspaper was started—which it was confidently hoped would enjoy a similar patronage from the fashionable hotel-keepers and landlords at the West-end which the *Morning Advertiser* has had from the class of publicans—the supreme potentate might sometimes be seen presenting a very odd figure. He had been originally intended for the kirk, and was a well-informed man; but to see him at or after midnight in his official chair, writing his "leader," was, we are assured, a treat for a philosopher. With the slips of paper before him, a pot of porter close at hand, and a pipe of tobacco in his mouth, or casually laid down, he proceeded *secundum artem*. The head hung with the chin on his collar-bone, as in deep thought—a whiff—another—a tug at the beer—and a line and a half, or two lines, committed to the blotted paper! By this process, repeated with singular regularity, he would contrive, between the hours of twelve and three, to produce as decent a newspaper column as was perhaps the average of that time. Verily it is true, in reference to men as well as to scenes, that "distance lends enchantment to the view."

In order to convey an idea of the sale of the daily newspapers published, the following estimate may be given:—

	1848.		1849.		1850.
Times	11,025,500	....	11,300,000	....	11,900,000
Morning Advertiser ..	1,538,000	....	1,528,000	....	1,549,000
Daily News	3,530,000	....	1,375,000	....	1,152,000
Morning Herald	1,335,000	....	1,147,000	....	1,139,000
Morning Chronicle	1,150,000	....	937,500	....	912,547

POETRY AND PAINTERS.

POETRY and Painting are closely connected; what the one describes, the other portrays. Painting is only the offspring of poetry—one of the manifestations of the poetic spirit. Poetry is not syllables that jingle well together, prose cramped into metre, versification that may be measured by feet, and made to flow through meadows of margin; it is something higher, nobler, better than this. The poet is not simply a man who can sit in a chair and write verses, but he is a man speaking to man: a man, it is true, endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; who has contemplated nature in her thousand forms, who has treasured within him the remembrance of all that is beautiful and great, who has studied the huge volume that lies open before him with all its mountain tropes and lofty periods, and who is willing to communicate the sweetness he enjoys. This spirit is revealed to the world in unceasing variety.

Sometimes it produces a great man towering above his fellows—as he who was driven into greatness by the deer-stalking prosecution of a Warwickshire squire—Shakspeare, at whose words the world still laughs, or sheds big tears of sorrow, as the case may be. Sometimes it gives us a man whose beautiful conceptions are vividly portrayed in glowing colours on the canvass; a Raphael, whose glorious grouping and rich colouring attract our earnest gaze, and waken up within us something of the spirit of the painter. Old Bible scenes, so touching, so august, so natural, that we seem to breathe the very air of Palestine, and dwell within that holy land where Hebrew chivalry and Hebrew sanctity were centuries ago exhibited. Sometimes the poetic spirit is embodied

in the stone, and from the granite or the marble a Canova's chisel picks out the thing of beauty. Sometimes it shows itself in the lofty building which rises up before us in all its graceful proportions; and sometimes it is heard in solemn strains of harmony that wake up memories deep and tender, and fill the soul with rapture.

Poetry is evident in all these things. But it is especially evident in words and in colours. Each of these have their peculiar advantages. The writer in harmonious numbers tells us of some bright and beautiful scene—some happy spot from whence it seems all sorrow has fled for ever away; or, it may be, describes some pastoral locality—with exquisite fidelity presents us with minute particulars—the old mill-stream, the lowing cattle, the humble peasant, the setting sun, the background of trees, the thick close shadowy wood, where the last rays of the sun are shining in aslant, making a path of golden light along the stems and branches in its range—gnarled trunks, and twisted boughs, and trembling leaves, and bark-stripped bodies of old trees; and a long, long time it takes to tell all this, and the reader has to fashion it in his mind's eye, and imagine how it looked;—but the painter at once brings the whole scene before us, the very autumn tints upon the leaves, the parasite that climbs upon the oak, beneath whose shade the peasant man is sitting. Then, again, on the other hand, the painter has done all he can in that one view,—he can give you but a momentary glance,—he cannot show you how the sunlight died away, and darkness fell upon the wood. But the poet still goes on, the lengthening shadows lengthen still, fresh incidents occur, the narrative is told—of humble mundane life or angel world—fact after fact, or incident after incident, till the final catastrophe comes.

The poet Young and the painter Blake were of the same turn of thought, and it is this that makes the illustrations which Blake has furnished so admirably adapted to the *Night Thoughts*. They are grotesque and sublime, and so is the poem. The painter fully enters into all the wonderful metaphors which the poet has used, and illustrates them and makes them corporeal. The picture which is to be seen in the Society of Arts in London, the "Final Judgment," by Barry, exhibits the same sort of feeling that is evident in the "Inferno" of Dante. Poets and painters are guided by the same genius, appeal to the same feelings, but work with different tools.

Aristotle says that poetry is the most philosophic of all writing, inasmuch as its object was truth, not individual and local, but general and collective. And so it is; and the poet, or the painter, who makes his work the image of man and nature, is doing good service to the world. But nature must be presented in her beautiful form; not only the experience but the imagination must work; and the tendency should ever be to elevate, and never to debase.

The great end of painting is to please the eye, and the chief design of poetry is to please the mind. Thus far the parallel of the arts holds true; with this difference, that the principal end of painting is to please, and the chief design of poetry is to instruct. In this the latter seems to have the advantage over the former; but when we consider the work of the painter as suggestive of the highest and noblest emotions, we can hardly confine the benefit of instruction exclusively to poetry.

"True poetry the painter's power displays;
True painting emulates the poet's lays,—
The rival sisters, fond of equal fame,
Alternate change their office and their name;
Bid silent poetry the canvass warm,
The tuneful page with speaking charm.
"What to the ear sublimer rapture brings,
That strain alone the genuine poet sings;
That form alone where glows peculiar grace,
The genuine painter condescends to trace:
No sordid theme will verse or paint admit,
Unworthy colours, or unworthy wit."

Enough has been said to show that the spirit of poetry belongs alike to the writer and the painter; and here we close, lest a weary reader should be tempted to re-echo the words of good King George II., "*I hate Boettry, and Bainting too.*"